

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 02239 200922Z  
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05  
SP-02 SS-15 SSC-01 /044 W  
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R 200853Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3250  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 2239

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, TW  
SUBJECT: GROC MINISTER OF EDUCATION RESIGNS

1. IN AN APRIL 19 PRESIDENTIAL ORDER THE GROC HAS ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATION OF EDUCATION MINISTER CHIANG YEN-SHIH. CHIANG SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND MINISTER-WITHOUT-PORTFOLIO IN THE WAKE OF AN APRIL 18 SHIP CAPSIZING AT SU AO PORT THAT RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF 15 PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS, WITH 21 STILL MISSING. THE GROUP, COMPRISING PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS FROM NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, NATIONAL NORMAL UNIVERSITY, AND TAMKANG COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, WERE TOURING THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF THE SU AO PORT AS PART OF A BI-YEARLY SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATION SPONSORED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

2. THE PRESIDENTIAL ORDER ALSO ANNOUNCED THE SELECTION OF DR. LI YUAN-TSU (2621/0337/4662) AS THE NEW MINISTER OF EDUCATION. LI, A NATIVE OF HUNAN, HAD BEEN PRESIDENT OF CHENGCHIH UNIVERSITY SINCE 1973. HE HOLDS AN LLD FROM BONN UNIVERSITY AND HAS PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LAW AT CHENGCHIH AND AS A DISTRICT AND HIGH COURT JUDGE. DURING HIS 1974 VISIT TO THE US AS AN  
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PAGE 02 TAIPEI 02239 200922Z

IV GRANTEE, LI WAS DESCRIBED AS SERIOUS-MINDED, VAIN, QUICK-TEMPERED AND RUDE, WITH A LESS THAN FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US. REPUTED TO BE A CAPABLE ADMINISTRATOR, HE IMPRESSES SOME US OBSERVERS AS STIFF AND FGMAI AND MORE EUROPEAN-ORIENTED THAN FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER CHIANG.

3. COMMENT: CHIANG'S RESIGNATION IS PRIMARILY ATTRIBUTED TO CHINESE TRADITION REQUIRING THAT SENIOR OFFICIALS ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURE OR DISASTER, BUT THE GROC'S QUICK ACCEPTANCE OF HIS RESIGNATION RAISES THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PREMIER ALSO SAW SOME ADVANTAGE IN TAKING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RELIEVE CHIANG OF HIS CABINET RESPONSIBILITIES. ALTHOUGH CHIANG HAS LONG HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PREMIER, HIS CONTINUING PERSONAL INDISCRETIONS, HIS PROGRESSIVE ATTITUDE ON EDUCATION POLICIES THAT HAS ANTAGONIZED MORE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PARTY, CONTINUING HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS PROBLEMS, AND HIS EXTREMELY PRO-US ATTITUDE MAY HAVE BEEN FACTORS ENCOURAGING THE PREMIER TO REMOVE HIM FROM THE CABINET. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, BE RELUCTANT AT THIS POINT TO SPECULATE THAT CHIANG HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DROPPED FROM FAVOR AND WILL BE SEEKING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING UP TO HIS RESIGNATION.

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PINT, TW, (CHIANG YEN-SHIH)  
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